

Northern Great Plains Network

Inventory and Monitoring Monthly Report

December 2001

Greetings! I'm sorry to say that I've missed a few newsletters. I have no excuse other than my inability to juggle several jobs at one time. Hopefully, in the future these "monthly" newsletters on the Northern Great Plains Network I&M Program will indeed be issued "monthly"! Below are some highlights.

Network Meeting: As discussed in some recent emails, the next meeting of the Northern Great Plains Network is scheduled for January 16, 2002, (from 9:00am to 4:00pm) in Rapid City. The meeting will be held at the Hotel Alex Johnson. Make your reservations as soon as possible (1 800 888-2539 or 605 342-1210: refer to group #2444). The Nekota group will be meeting on the 15th of January at the same hotel. In the next few weeks I will send out an agenda on the I&M meeting.

Inventory Study Plan: I have not yet heard officially from the National I&M Office in regards to the review of the Inventory Study Plan we submitted September 30. However, I have heard informally that the review panel was generally pleased with the plan and will be requesting mostly minor revisions. Funding for FY02-04 is contingent on approval of the plan.

Following submission of the plan I did receive additional comments from some of you. I intend to incorporate your comments into the revised plan.

Biological (Data) Technician: I am pleased to announce the Dawn Holguim has been hired as the Network I&M data technician. She will EOD on December 30, with her duty station being Badlands NP. Dawn has both training and work experience in the wildlife profession. In addition, she has extensive work experience in GIS. I believe she will be a great asset to the program.

Permanent I&M Program Office Location: When I relocated to the Black Hills area a few months back it was understood by all that one of my first tasks would be to collect information on potential permanent office sites for the I&M Program. In FY04 we should get permanent monitoring money and consist of a staff of 6-9 people. Badlands National Park has graciously hosted me since my arrival and can continue to host me in the interim. Furthermore, the park remains a long-term option.

I recently met with representatives of the Black Hills National Forest (BHNF) to explore the possibility of co-locating with them. The BHNF will soon be building a new office just south of Rapid City, on Highway 16 (the route that goes to Mt. Rushmore). The building will house staff from two of their district offices and staff from the USFS Rocky Mountain Research Station. In addition, the building will include a large visitor center. The BHNF is very excited about the possibility of the NPS I&M Program co-locating with them. I personally am very enthused about this option and plan to keep gathering information. That's the good news. The bad news is that they will start designing the

building in the next few months so they will need a commitment from us soon (the building isn't expected to be completed until the beginning of FY04). I expect this to be a significant agenda item at our January 16th meeting. I would like you all to think hard about this option as a permanent site for the I&M Program and the potential of also taking advantage of the visitor center. A representative from the Forest Service will be at the meeting.

Fish Inventory: Bob White of Montana State University completed the fish inventories at those parks which were determined to be short of documenting 90% of the fish species expected to occur (Devils Tower, Ft. Laramie, Mt. Rushmore, Scotts Bluff, Wind Cave). The final report will be submitted by February 15, 2002. Voucher specimens are at the respective parks (except for Devils Tower specimens which are at Mt. Rushmore).

Museum Voucher Search: A contract was completed at the end of last fiscal year with Hugh Genoways of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to conduct a search of museums which may house voucher specimens from Northern Great Plains Network parks. The CESU at Lincoln contributed funds to the project.